

# 18th Annual Vermont Kindergarten Conference



Friday, April 9, 2010  
Hilton Hotel; Burlington, VT



**The Vermont Kindergarten Conference offers kindergarten teachers, administrators, early educators, students in educator preparation programs, and others an opportunity to gather, network, learn, and celebrate.**

## **8:00 - REGISTRATION & CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST**

Come early and bring your appetite! The continental breakfast includes fresh pastries, bagels, and platters of fresh fruit; it's superb!

## **9:00 - WELCOME**

### **Keynote Address:**

#### **Teaching from the Inside Out: Lessons from a Navajo Kindergarten**

This talk describes Dr. Gallas' experience teaching kindergarten in a Navajo community school. It explores the challenges and the benefits of implementing a developmental kindergarten with disadvantaged children who are English Language learners and proposes that, when confronted with extreme cultural and linguistic differences, relationship is the initial building block of the effective developmental curriculum.

#### **Keynote Speaker: Karen Gallas**

Dr. Karen Gallas taught for more than thirty years in urban, suburban and rural public schools as an early childhood and elementary teacher. She has been a member of the Faculty of Education at the University of Maine and held adjunct appointments in Education with Lesley University Graduate School in Cambridge, MA, Wheelock College Graduate School in Boston, MA, and California Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo, CA.

Karen's work as a teacher researcher is recognized nationally and internationally. She has written many articles and four books on the role of literacy learning across all disciplines, on science language and inquiry, on the arts as a vehicle for learning, on the process of conducting teacher research, and on the role of imagination in literacy learning. Karen consults with public school systems, early childhood centers, teacher educators, government agencies, museums and research foundations in the areas of science education, multiple literacies, imagination and literacy, early childhood education, arts in education and teacher research. She also works with children as a psychotherapist and collaborates with schools around issues of classroom adjustment. She works and lives in Vermont and can be reached by email at [k\\_gallas@hotmail.com](mailto:k_gallas@hotmail.com).

## **10:30—12:30 - WORKSHOP SESSION I**

### **A. Vermont Initiatives to Put the "Kinder" Back in the "Garten" I**

In our eagerness to ensure that children are ready for first grade, meet the grade expectations, and make steady strides towards achieving "proficient" status on later state

assessments, we have moved away from what we know about the five-year-olds who enter our kindergarten classes every year. In this workshop, participants will hear about the efforts of SVSU to transform its kindergarten classes into more student centered and developmentally appropriate places of learning. They will discuss what factors led to this work, how it's going, and what they are discovering as they implement their initiative.

***Presenters: Team from Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union***

**Niki Burnham, Kindergarten Teacher, Monument Elementary School, Bennington**

Niki is a graduate of Linfield College in Oregon. She holds a degree in both Early Childhood, and Elementary Education. Niki has been teaching kindergarten in SVSU for six years.

**Lauren Maguire, Kindergarten Teacher, Molly Stark Elementary School, Bennington**

Lauren graduated from Plattsburgh State University with dual certification of elementary and special education. She is currently finishing up a masters degree with a concentration as a reading specialist. This is Lauren's third year teaching kindergarten; she also has been a Title 1 reading teacher and a K-6 special educator.

**Donna MacKenzie King, Principal, Molly Stark Elementary School, Bennington**

Donna has a BS in elementary education followed and an M.Ed. in Educational Leadership from Keene State College. She has ten years experience as an elementary teacher and ten years experience as an elementary principal in Bennington, Vermont.

**Karen Pratt Burnell, Director of Early Childhood, Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union**

Karen has a M.Ed. from the University of Vermont and has worked in the field of education for 33 years, 26 of those in early childhood education. Karen has experience as an early childhood educator, special educator, consultant, and administrator.

**Kate Rogers, Essential Early Education Consultant, VT Department of Education**

Kate has a M.Ed. from the University of Vermont and has worked in the field of education for almost 30 years. Kate has experience as an early childhood educator, essential early education coordinator, and consultant. Kate's primary focus is supporting and including children with special needs in public and community-based early childhood settings.

## **B. Spark Your School: The Brain-Body Connection**

Come move and learn. We will explore practical ways of bringing the neuroscience research about the power of movement on learning to your classroom. You'll learn why every brain, young and old alike, needs to move smartly everyday. You will also experience simple ways to establish kinespheres, (personal space), learn songs and moves for lining up and transitions from one activity to the next, sample some FUN, successful approaches to hand writing, moving math patterns, and more. Wear loose comfortable clothing and bring water to stay hydrated.

***Presenter: Darienne Oaks, Educational Movement Coach***

Darienne Oaks is an Educational Movement Coach and director of the enrichment program at Mary Hogan Elementary School in Middlebury, Vermont. With over 30 years of experience in public education, she has provided training to teachers around the country in such venues as the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and national and regional education conferences through The Society for Developmental Education. A dancer and musician as well as educator, she directed the dance program at St. Michael's College, Colchester, Vermont for 10 years, and was also education faculty at UVM, Burlington, Vermont. Her "Brainy Boppers" materials help students and teachers move smartly everyday and have been field tested in Vermont.

## **C. Blocks: Center Stage**

Play in the block corner can create a climate that stimulates social, mathematical, scientific literacy. This workshop will give us time to value children's play in blocks and think about how to make it the center of discourse and a spring board for inquiry.

***Presenter: Joanne Harvey, Kindergarten Teacher, Georgia Elementary School***

JoAnn is an Early Childhood graduate from UVM, and has a Masters in Math & Science Education from Trinity. She has been working with children in preschool to third grade students for 25 years in both private and public settings. She admits to having a “passion for play and problem solving.”

**D. Natural Science and Young Children**

Young children are natural scientists, curious about their world and eager to understand it. Nature provides a never-ending supply of real world, hands-on learning opportunities for children. Youngsters can engage in many of the processes of scientific investigation as they play outside and explore nature. And research shows that outside play and outdoor learning experiences are important for children’s well-being, resulting in decreased childhood obesity, enhanced attention functioning, reduced stress and more.

In this two hour workshop, we’ll consider what it looks like when young children are doing science and what teachers and parents can do to enhance science concept development while providing opportunities for children to develop science skills and science dispositions. Workshop participants will spend time engaged in natural science activities, both inside and outside, and we’ll discuss a variety of ways to integrate inquiry-based, place-based science learning throughout the curriculum and to involve parents in improving children’s science understanding.

***Presenter: Lisa Purcell, Director, Four Winds Nature Institute***

**E. Telling, Drawing and Writing Stories in Kindergarten**

Children's writing comes from their hearts. In this workshop, participants will explore ways to offer them the tools and experiences to unleash their inner writer. Though Becky's work is influenced by Lucy Calkins, Katie Wood Ray and Mary Ellen Giacobbe, her greatest influence is what she knows about children in her heart. Explore writers' workshop in a play-based kindergarten.

***\*\*Please bring a sample of student writing.*** Thanks!

***Presenter: Becky Crandell, Kindergarten Teacher, Rumney Memorial School***

Becky has been in the early childhood field for most of her life. After many years teaching pre-kindergarten, she challenged herself to create a play-based kindergarten. She is now in her sixth year as a kindergarten teacher and is fascinated with how to encourage writing in ways that honor play-based ideals.

**12:30-1:30 - LUNCH and Networking**

**1:30—3:00 - WORKSHOP SESSION II**

**A. Vermont Initiatives to Put the “Kinder” Back in the “Garten” II**

This workshop is a companion to the morning session by the same name. Participants will hear about a group of teachers and administrators from Franklin West SU who are engaged in transforming their kindergarten classes into more student centered and developmentally appropriate places of learning. They will discuss what factors led to this work, report on what’s currently happening, and share what they are discovering as they implement their initiative.

***Presenters: Team from Franklin West Supervisory Union***

**Jenny Blackman, Kindergarten Teacher, Fletcher Elementary School, Cambridge**

Jenny is a veteran kindergarten teacher who has recently “come out of the closet” as an advocate for play in early education. She teaches two half-day sessions daily at Fletcher Elementary School and rides her horse in the summer!

**Rachel Fightlin, Early Education, Georgia Elementary School, Georgia**

**Joanne Harvey, Kindergarten Teacher, Georgia Elementary School, Georgia**

**Nancy Hurt, Preschool Teacher, Fletcher Elementary School, Cambridge** Nancy has taught Preschool at Fletcher elementary School for the last eight years. She believes in collaborating throughout the school year with families as well as her student’s future Kindergarten teacher to insure continuity and smooth transitions.

**B. What is teacher research?**

This workshop will introduce participants to classroom research as a way to improve instruction, assessment, and student outcomes. It will introduce participants to the processes of identifying research questions and collecting data, as well as offering suggestions for forming a collegial group of teacher researchers.

***Presenter: Karen Gallas***

**C. Integrating Yoga into the Classroom**

Betsy will share materials that will enable teachers to use yoga poses and breathing techniques to promote health, self-awareness, renew energy and relieve stress and anxiety in the classroom. She will introduce the YogaKids program and other useful resources that will help teachers create an inclusive classroom environment. Participants should wear loose comfortable clothing and bring a yoga mat or blanket if possible. Chairs will also be available for those that prefer one.

***Presenter: Betsy Eckfeldt, Certified YogaKids Instructor***

Betsy Eckfeldt is the early education teacher at the Waitsfield Elementary School and she is a certified YogaKids instructor. She has a Reggio inspired classroom and likes to do yoga and gardening with her class.

**D. Songwriting for Understanding**

Join Vermont songwriter and kindergarten teacher Josh Brooks in exploring songwriting as a tool for understanding young children, and for helping young children to understand each other. Josh will share insights and questions from his on-going teacher research, including: different models for songwriting with children; connections between songwriting and other narrative-based practices; and how 'listening forums' can help children to think and speak more effectively. Part of the workshop will be devoted to collaborative songwriting;

**attendees are invited to bring their instruments!**

***Presenter: Josh Brooks, Songwriter and Kindergarten Teacher***

Josh Brooks has been a teaching songwriter for nearly a decade, teaching at the pre-K level locally and performing songs from four albums of original music throughout the northeast. While Brooks began writing songs with young children in 2001, it was not until 2007 that he began treating his songwriting work as teacher research, after reading Vivian Paley's *The Girl With the Brown Crayon*. Brooks recently defended his master's thesis, entitled: "An Apprenticeship in Songwriting: One Teaching Songwriter, Eighteen Kindergarteners, Forty-Four Songs." Brooks resides with his wife, three daughters and several guitars in Vergennes, Vermont.

## **E. Including Dramatic Play in Kindergarten to Build Reading/Story Comprehension**

We will look at kindergarten students “play” following stories read aloud to observe and discuss what types of learning are demonstrated through their play. How does the play drive instruction? How is dramatic play useful for all kindergarten learners? We will investigate how to ensure that “play” is included in the curriculum and valued for the learning opportunities it offers.

### ***Presenters:***

#### **Beth Parker, Kindergarten Teacher, East Montpelier School**

Beth is a kindergarten teacher at East Montpelier Elementary School. Previously, she was a preschool teacher.

#### **Lindy Johnson, Literacy Coordinator, Washington Central Supervisory Union**

Lindy is the Literacy Coordinator for Washington Central Supervisory Union. Her job includes work in preK-grade 8 classrooms.

## **3:00 Adjourn**

### **Registration Deadline – March 29, 2010**

Cost: \$90.00 per person \$50.00 if a full time student (bring student ID)  
Fee for Parking Garage: \$10.00

Follow this link to register online:

<http://creator.zoho.com/shirleyrawson/kindergarten-conference-2010>

Payment: Make checks payable to “UVM” and mail to:

Shirley Rawson  
VT Department of Education  
120 State Street  
Montpelier VT 05620-2501

Fax Purchase orders to 828-3146 Attention: Shirley

Questions can be sent to [shirley.rawson@state.vt.us](mailto:shirley.rawson@state.vt.us) or 828-5128

NOTE: If you do NOT receive an e-mail from Shirley by March 29, 2010 stating that payment has been received, you will need to pay at the door.  
Thank you!